

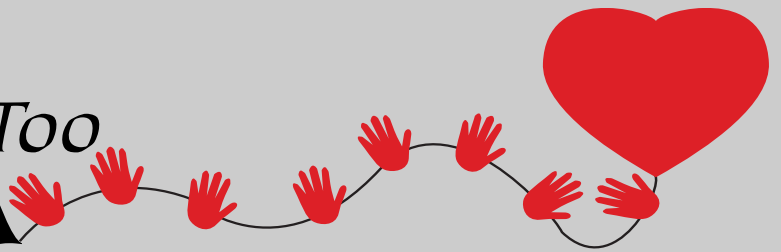


Maricopa County CASA^{Too}

Court Appointed Special Advocate Program Newsletter

www.superiorcourt.maricopa.gov

April 2003



Tips for kids coping with war in Iraq; Things to do; Admin thanks

As a CASA volunteer, the challenge may arise to discuss the war with your CASA child. While it may be difficult to initiate such a conversation, finding out how the child is dealing with the recent world events is extremely important. Our CASA children have experienced much trauma and loss in their short lives, and are prone to be vulnerable to intense reactions to the war. We would like to offer some general guidelines that may be helpful. These tips were excerpted from articles by Dr. David G. Fassler, MD, and Margarita Suarez, RN. They include:

1. Listen attentively. This may be one of the hardest things to do. By listening, you increase your awareness of what the child is feeling and you can also help the child become more aware of his feelings or lack of feelings.

2. You want to create a safe environment where the child can express concerns and ask questions. You want them to know that you believe their feelings are important, even if their feelings are different from yours or what you think she/he should feel.

3. There are children that may not want to talk about their thoughts, feelings, or fears. They may be more comfortable drawing pictures, creating with play dough, or writing stories or poems directly or indirectly related to current events.

4. It may be helpful to express your own feelings about the war. It's OK for the child to know you are worried and uncertain about the future. But stay "child focused" and don't dwell on your own concerns and fears.

5. Most CASA children are receiving some degree of counseling or therapy to which additional help can be acquired, if necessary. If the child becomes too preoccupied with intrusive thoughts, images, or worries about the war, it would be advisable to discuss this with the child's therapist.

6. It's best not to disagree with the way the child is handling his/her anxiety. A child might feel reassured by knowing that things are happening far away, on the other side of the world. That may be her way of feeling safe.

7. When you are asked questions, you can expect to have the same question asked again later. You may need to repeat explanations several times. Keep your answers at an age appropriate level.

8. It is empowering to a child to be part of the answer to a problem. There are ways in which even a child can reach out to others during this difficult time. Maybe writing to the President or to the local newspaper will be the way for expression. Still another may want to email soldiers or send a card to families who have relatives in the military.

9. Do not try to do this alone. Be sure that the child has other support systems. Together, you can make a list with the child.

10. The child may be more concerned about his own situation than the global or national crisis. What is life like in his foster home? Or, what is going on with her biological family? This is probably more important to her than the whole issue of war. Do not minimize the child's own experience while the rest of the world is so focused on war events.

Creative Opportunities

- Arizonans for Children (AFC) is having a fun Art Day at the Visitation Center on April 12, 2003 from 1:30-3:30 hosted by Free Arts Arizona. The Visitation Center is at the Historic First Church at 402 W. Monroe, Phoenix. Call Kaye at 480-838-0085 for more information.

- Go Away Tours is offering a hike for CASAs and kids on April 12, 2003. Open to a group of no more than six CASAs and their CASA children, the day will offer a hike and lunch in the 7 Springs Recreation Area at the end of Cave Creek Road. Minimal cost. Please call the CASA

office for more information.

- Arizonans for Children is setting up a Ticket Bank for CASAs to access for fun things to do with CASA children. They have secured tickets to the Out of Africa Wildlife Park and the AZ Museum for Youth. Please call Kaye at 480-838-0085 for more information.

Administrative Volunteers

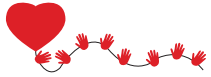
One of the statutory requirements of the CASA Program is the timely screening of dependency petitions as they are filed for the appropriateness of CASA appointment. We receive close to one hundred petitions a month. Several of our CASA Mentors have volunteered to assist with this staggering caseload, donating some office time each month to screen petitions. It is with our deepest gratitude that we thank Beverly Burch, Anne Donahoe and Jackie Flowers for their additional service to the program and Arizona's foster children.

Big Win

On Friday, February 28th, 2003, the CASA Program in Maricopa was treated to a howlingly fun night at America West Arena. The Arizona Lottery teamed up with the Phoenix Coyotes to donate a box suite for our CASA volunteers and their foster children. Bob Christensen, an Arizona Lottery representative, was there to greet and meet several CASA volunteers, kids and staff. It was a room to ourselves with an excellent view of the Coyotes triumph over the Anaheim Ducks, a sweeping 3 to 1 victory! All had a wildly wonderful evening at the game and we send our sincerest thanks to both the Arizona Lottery and the Phoenix Coyotes on behalf of the children. Let's hope more opportunities like these are available!

Farewell

With tears in our eyes and happiness in our hearts, we say farewell and Congratulations to Esperanza Tavena. She is moving on to an excellent opportunity to work in Family Violence Outreach with the Yaqui tribe. She will be missed.



Upcoming Events

April 8, 2 p.m.-4 p.m.

Childhelp Tour, Phoenix
RSVP to CASA Office

April 10, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Surrogate Parent Training
Mesa Public Library
64 East First Street, 2nd floor, Mesa
Reservations:
Grizelda Valenzuela, 480-893-9216

April 10, 6 p.m.-9 p.m.

Case Selection Meeting
Juvenile Court Complex
Durango, Room 223

April 16, 6:30 p.m.

Central Phoenix Peer Group Mtg
Host: Marcia Rysdon
Children's Visitation Center
RSVP to CASA Office

April 23, 6:30 p.m.

Scottsdale Peer Group Mtg
Host: Mary Lou Davis
RSVP to CASA Office

April 26, 6 p.m.

Hands of Hope
Volunteer Appreciation Banquet
Phx Airport Marriott Hotel

April 29, 11:30 a.m. -1:30 p.m.

CPS - Abuse Investigations
Southeast Facility - Mesa
Saguaro Room

May 7, 12 p.m.- 1:30 p.m.

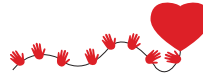
Brown Bag w/Judge Scott
Durango - Room 223

May 10, 9 a.m.-11 a.m.

Special Education Overview
AZ Supreme Court Building

Don't let a wonderful opportunity pass you by! Check our training schedule.

Be sure to RSVP so we have an accurate count of attendees.



Peer Group Meetings

Scottsdale — 1:30 p.m.

***Special April date - April 23**
Last Wednesday Of each month
Home of Mary Lou Davis

East Valley — 6:30 p.m.

Third Wednesday of each month.
Home of Joe & Vicky Orlando

North Phoenix — 6:30 p.m.

***Please see special location in the April Calendar.**
Third Wednesday of the month.
Home of Marcia Rysdon.

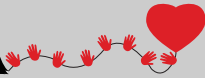
West Valley* — 6:30 p.m.

***Starting in May**
Second Thursday of each month
Glendale Public Library
Host: Donna Spence

We hope to find a new home for the Central Phoenix Peer Group.

Please call the CASA Office for addresses and phone numbers.

CASA



Contacts and Information

Locations

Program Staff

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